The Ministry will consider new projects as and when they are received from the Govt. of Orissa for financial assistance subject to merits of the proposal, availability of funds and *inter-se* priorities.

Telephone connections in villages

1205 SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to provide telephone connections to those villages which are atleast having a population of more than 2000 and have no telephone facilities;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether Public Call Office facility exists in villages which has more than 2000 population; and

(d) if not, when the Public Call Offices would be opened in such villages ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. The present policy of the Department is to provide one Long Distance Public Telephone in every inhabited hexagon of 5 KM sides each. For this purpose, the country has been divided into hexagonal Cells and there are 50,280 inhabited hexagons in the country and/ Long Distance Public Telephones have been provided in 25 856 hexagons as on 31-3-87.

(c) Under the scheme of spatial distribution, villages of more than 2000 population have been provided LDPTs.

(d) Not applicable in view of (c) above.

Vayudoot service via Jharsuguda to Bhubaneswar

1206. SHRI BASUDEB MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to introduce new Vayudoot service between Bhubaneswar and Raipur via Jharsuguda;

(b) the reasons for the delay in introduction of this service; and

(c) by when Vayudoot service will start operating on these lines ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) Subject to availability of aircraft capacity, development of infrastructure facilities and economic viability of operations, Vayudoot has plans to airlink Jharsuguda. The routing of the proposed service has not yet been decided.

(b) and (c) Constraints of aircraft capacity with Vayudoot and paucity of resources with National Airports Authority, do not permit immediate operations to Jharsuguda. Jharsuguda is included in the list of stations to be airlinked during the current plan period.

Conversion of narrow/metre gauge rail lines into broad gauge

1207. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the criterion for conversion of narrow or meter gauge railway line into broad gauge railway line; and

(b) what are the railway lines under conversion in Maharashtra under this criterion, and when they are likely to be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) Gauge conversion proposals are considered;

(i) when the traffic likely to develop in future cannot be handled on the existing system.

(ii) when the magnitude of transhipment involved is such that it is uneconomical or is not feasible at all to handle anticipated volume of traffic.

(iii) when it is needed for providing speedy and uninterrupted means